Genre analysis

Publication details

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Published online on: 25 Jan 2016

How to cite: Philip Shaw. 25 Jan 2016, Genre analysis from: The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes Routledge
Accessed on: 17 Oct 2023

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GENRE ANALYSIS

Philip Shaw

Introduction

The term *genre* is widely used in the humanities to discuss the ways in which texts and works of art are structured by their creators and received by readers and viewers (Paltridge 1997; Frow 2005). *Genre analysis*, however, is more strongly associated with particular disciplines, among them applied linguistics (classically Swales 1990; see Tardy 2011a, 2011b and Paltridge 2012), and there are good reasons for this. Neither expert nor novice writers of academic prose typically have explicit knowledge of (or a metalanguage for) the rhetorical, and particularly the formal, features of their disciplinary genres. Their discussion is usually focussed on the thematic features: the content. Consequently, the English for academic purposes (EAP) expert’s contribution is rhetorical genre analysis. Genre analysis aims to make genre knowledge available to those outside the circle of expert producers of the texts, for use in whatever way they wish, in teaching or translation, for example. The description is formulated like this to exclude from this chapter two other possible uses of genre analysis within EAP: research studies of how genres are acquired by learners (cf Bawarshi and Reiff 2010: 116); and the use of analysis of genre as a learning activity where people who are not trained in EAP – experts or learners within a particular discipline – learn to analyse their ‘own’ genres (Swales and Feak 2000; Cheng, e.g. 2007; Negretti and Kuteeva 2011).

There is an overwhelming quantity of research aiming to make the features of academic genres explicit, much of it discussed in other chapters in this volume. Here only three issues will be taken up very schematically: first, the nature of genres themselves; second, patterns of relationship among genres in a variety of dimensions; and third, methods for investigating genre in EAP. These will be approached in an eclectic way, mentioning observations which appear to be illuminating in applied contexts even though they derive from research done in the three different paradigms discussed by Hyon (1996): ‘EAP’ (Swales 2004; Hyland 2004), composition studies (Tardy and Jwa, this volume) and systemic functional linguistics (Hood, this volume). These traditions have, in any case, learned from one another and come closer over the years.
The nature of genres

Because the development of language for specific purposes (LSP)-oriented genre analysis since the 1980s and 1990s is part of an earlier general increased interest in genre, it is useful to look at the characteristics of genres as established outside applied linguistics before looking at how EAP researchers have viewed the concept.

One thing that all writers on genre seem agreed on is that the relationship of a genre to a text on paper or on the screen is not simply that of a class to one of its members (e.g. Hymes 1974; Frow 2005). Derrida (1980: 65) says ‘every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging’. Texts do not realize genre like speech sounds realize phonemes, or instantiate them as a mouse instantiates the species mouse. The relation between texts and genres differs from that between species and individual or class and instantiation in at least three ways. One is that a text affects its genre. Innovations in a text change the definition of the genre, and as innovations accumulate the genre changes. Another is that texts do not have to draw on a single genre; genres can be mixed and texts can have features of several genres. In fact, writers often speak of drawing on generic resources rather than producing a genre. Third, a text can be more or less prototypical of its genre (Swales 1990; Paltridge 1997). Texts perform or draw on genres rather than instantiating them, so many will have the most frequent characteristics, but some will not.

Frow (2005: 9) gives a set of ‘structural dimensions’ of genres from a literary perspective (my numbering):

1. a set of formal features (layout, rhyme scheme, syntactic patterns, vocabulary)
2. a thematic structure (typical content)
3. a situation of address (medium, writer–reader relations)
4. a structure of implication (shared background and assumptions with the reader)
5. a rhetorical function (‘the text is structured in such a way as to achieve certain pragmatic effects’)
6. a regulative frame which directs us to read the text as a member of a given genre.

This list can be compared with Flowerdew’s succinct definition: ‘Genres are staged, structured, communicative events, motivated by various communicative purposes, and performed by members of specific discourse communities’ (2011: 140) which represents the areas agreed among applied researchers (Swales 1990, 2004; Bhatia 1993, 2004; Hyland, e.g. 2004; Martin and Rose 2008; Bawarshi and Reiff 2010). The emphasis in both characterizations on situatedness and function or purpose reflects another general observation among writers: that genre is a ‘form of social action’ (Miller 1984). A genre is often said to be basically characterized by ‘the action it is used to accomplish’ rather than ‘the substance or the form of discourse’ (Miller 1984: 151). Frow’s points 1 and partly 2 correspond to Flowerdew’s ‘staged’ and ‘structured’, while 3 and partly 4 characterize the ‘discourse community’ that performs the genre; it has a social structure and shared cognitive characteristics. By ‘generic content’, Frow means that an important characteristic of an aesthetic genre like epic or Western film is what it is about and what we are supposed to know to understand it. Similarly, there are certain things that can be said and others everyone is supposed to know in a chemistry article, but because EAP researchers are not chemists, it is the province of content experts rather than EAP experts to know what they are. This is a difficult area in EAP because there are some things about specific disciplines...
which are more easily articulated by discourse analysts than by disciplinary insiders (Hyland 2004). Frow’s point 5 refers to pragmatic effects in the plural, corresponding to Flowerdew’s ‘various communicative purposes’, and underlining that texts have a variety of purposes, which may not be obvious to the analyst (Askehave and Swales 2001).

Frow’s conceptualization of frame (see Paltridge 1997, his source) as separate from situation of address is useful: we recognize genres partly by the context we meet them in and the form they present in that context. Frow is thinking of how framing a text as a poem affects the way we read it, but the notion of a reading–directing frame is relevant in EAP as well. For example, we read a dissertation submitted for examination in a different way from the same text as a monograph.

Of course, the concept of genre underlying much work in EAP differs from that in literary studies in several ways. Most importantly, Frow is very relaxed about the concepts of register and genre, saying that Halliday’s concept of register (he cites Halliday 1978) is ‘roughly similar to that of genre’ (2005: 16), although applied linguists generally want to make a clear distinction between them. Within systemic functional linguistics, register and genre are technical terms (Hood, this volume), but a generally accepted distinction would be that made by Biber and Conrad (2009): register relates the situation of use of a text variety to its linguistic features on the level of lexis and grammar (giving us, for example, the register of chemistry lectures), while genre relates this situation of use to ‘the conventional structures used to construct a complete text within the variety’ (p. 2); that is the functional structures at various levels like the introduction or the research gap.

Four clines for classifying EAP genres

The concept of genre is, thus, anchored in function and situation. Therefore, when texts that can be assigned to a certain genre are analyzed within EAP, attention must be paid to more than just text, and specifically to particularities of function and situation. We can start to understand EAP genres and the ways they can be investigated by considering them as having been classified in four ways.

The first classificatory space is subdomain, with three poles: educational (learner and instructional), research-process and institutional. EAP texts are either prototypically in one of these subdomains, or somewhere in between. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995: 151) refer to curriculum, pedagogical or classroom genres. We can regard textbooks (Bondi, this volume) or lectures (Crawford-Camiciottoli, this volume) as prototypical instructional genres at tertiary level, and student assignments (Nesi, this volume) or presentations as prototypical learner genres. Research articles are the prototypes of research genres, and perhaps university prospectuses (Askehave 2007) or homepages (Hyland 2012; Osman 2008) are prototypical institutional genres (Biber 2006).

Other genres can be placed among these three poles. Doctoral dissertations are the final learner genre and also an important research genre (Swales 2004). There is a cline from clearly pedagogic genres like high-school reports to doctoral dissertations as primarily research genres. Official course guidelines or national (exam) syllabuses are institutional documents approved by management organs but they have direct influence on texts and on interactions in classroom genres. Research proposals, that is bids for funding for research (Connor and Mauranen 1999), are necessary parts of the research processes but they are defined by institutional needs.

Not only genres but also particular instances of texts are located at different points in these continua. Secondary-school textbooks represent a (prototypical) educational genre,
but textbooks aimed at postgraduates might well be close to research monographs, and vice versa. Some dissertations are more learner-like, others more research-like.

A second way of classifying genres is in terms of occlusion (Swales 1996). One end of this cline is occupied by public genres, which are freely available for consultation for those wanting to write them, and usually familiar from other uses as well. Several have been mentioned above: textbooks, university prospectuses, homepages and academic articles. An occluded genre is one which is not usually made public, often leaving those who wish to use the genre without models. Prototypical examples are submission letters (Swales 1996), personal statements, and tenure and promotion evaluations (Hyon 2008). Degrees of occlusion vary: cover letters are just not of much general interest, while evaluations are protected because of their confidentiality. Ding’s (2007) investigation of the potentially occluded genre of personal statements was based on published examples of good practice whose existence shows that users of the genre want to reduce its occlusion.

A third dimension is independence, related to what Yang (personal communication) calls nuclear and peripheral. This characterizes genres in relation to an asymmetric relation of dependence, where the genres appear simultaneously. Thus, it is useful to use the label dependent for minor public genres like author bio statements (Hyland and Tse 2012), thesis acknowledgements (Hyland 2011) or book blurbs (Gea Valor 2005). While research articles may well occur without bios or highlights, theses without acknowledgements, and books without blurbs, the minor genres cannot occur without a ‘nucleus’.

The fourth dimension is degree of standardization or generification. Theorists lay emphasis on the point that all texts have some kind of genre affiliation but the degree of constraint that genre requirements place on texts varies considerably. Research grant proposals, official course descriptions and lab reports, for example, are likely to have predetermined headings and sections, while monographs and student essays are at least not usually subject to official structure requirements and may vary more widely in actual structure. Even within genres, there is considerable variation in standardization. In computer science and the humanities, academic articles have no standard set of headings (Lin and Evans 2012), whereas in many hard sciences the introduction-method-results-discussion format is more or less obligatory. Ease of information retrieval pushes genres in some fields towards standardization. The pressure may be strongest in the case of abstracts, where official standards exist (NISO 1996), and some fields require standardized ‘structured abstracts’ (Nakayama et al. 2005).

**Intergeneric relations**

Since the work of Kristeva (e.g. 1980) and Bakhtin (1986), intertextuality, the idea that texts are made of other texts, has been a commonplace. Fairclough (1992: 271) identifies a specific type of intertextuality which he calls constitutive; that is, similarities among texts at the generic level. Genres do not exist in isolation either within the individual’s store of genre knowledge or within a community’s communication patterns. Each genre stands in various types of relation to other genres; that is, texts assignable to a certain genre have a consistent and describable relation to texts assigned to some other genres. All the applied linguistics schools of genre studies have studied the ways in which genres relate to one another (Bawarshi and Reiff 2010; Martin and Rose 2008; Swales 2004; Flowerdew 2011), and in this section I attempt to catalogue these interrelations. I also impose a system on them, and the word *impose* reflects the fact that, in the interests of comprehensibility and insight, the system is likely to be tidier than reality. I mainly describe relations across genres, even though similar relations may exist among individual texts. It will be clear also that in some
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cases similar patterns of relation exist among variants of the same genre, and anyway there is no consensus on whether a particular group of texts should be regarded as constituting a genre or a subsection of some larger genre.

Diachronic relations

A new genre shares features of form and purpose with antecedent genres. This is particularly interesting at a moment like the present when electronic media enable the creation of new genres which must necessarily draw on knowledge of predecessors. Thus, blogs draw on generic knowledge about technical logs, commonplace books and clipping services, homepages, diaries, and newspaper columns (Miller and Shepherd 2004; Myers 2010) and, in the longer run, seventeenth-century scientific letters metamorphosed into twentieth-century scientific articles (Atkinson 1992; Banks 2005; Valle 2006). More generally, of course, as noted above, genres are in constant development, and to add a text to the body of texts grouped under a genre is to change the genre. The implication is that texts in a given genre are constrained not only by the needs of the present situation but also by the historic establishment of the genre, which may change rather slowly.

Intrapersonal relations

Synchronic relations can be divided into relations between the genres known by an individual (‘intrapersonal’), genres in different domains with similar functions (‘paradigmatic’), and relations between genres with different functions in the same domain (‘hierarchical’, ‘metageneric’ and ‘syntagmatic’).

I use the term ‘intrapersonal’ for genres which are related by the simple fact that the same person has knowledge of them. Because in writing (or speaking etc.) we draw on all our knowledge of genres, production in one genre is likely to be influenced to a lesser or greater extent by other genres we know (‘antecedent genres’), and this may affect our approach to the target, or, to put it differently, enable us to develop the genre in a new way. Rounsaville et al. (2008) asked ‘What genres (written, oral, digital) do students already know when they arrive in FYW [first-year writing] courses?’ They distinguished between high-road transfer, metacognitively aware use of antecedent genre resources and low-road transfer, automatic application of strategies from other genres. Their informants reported having written in more than thirty genres each, yet in their first university task they mainly drew on school genres. The notion ‘drew on’ means that there were similarities among texts at the generic level (constitutive intertextuality). The promotional discourse universities now adopt in staff, and student recruitment (Askehave 2007; Osman 2008) is said to spread to applications for promotion (Fairclough 1993) and personal homepages (Hyland 2012), and this may be because academics have simply become accustomed to it in other genres. This is one aspect of what Bhatia (2004: 100) calls the colonization of genres by one another; Bhatia’s formulation seems to suggest that it is the genres that have agency rather than the writers, and this might imply that colonization can be ‘low-road’ unintentional transfer.

Paradigmatic relations

Paradigmatic relations are highlighted by Bhatia (2004) in the English for specific purposes (ESP) tradition, and by the Sydney school (cf Martin and Rose 2008). Bhatia (2004: 66) argues for a category of super-genres or genre colonies, groupings ‘of closely related genres,
which to a large extent share their individual communicative purposes, although most of them will be different in a number of other respects, contexts of use and exploitations. This is exemplified by the colony of reporting genres, of which ‘company report’ is a central member, along with technical, scientific and medical reports (and many others). Bhatia distinguishes genres in the report colony largely by domain and subject matter. While these genres exist in different domains and have somewhat different structures, they are characterized by a common purpose and therefore some common features. More marginal members of the ‘colony’ are likely to include a variety of discourses because they serve a variety of purposes. Hence, they are what Bhatia calls ‘mixed genres’, although as he also notes business genres often have promotional and regulative sections with sharply distinct discourses, and this is not typical of academic genres, even proposals.

The term ‘colony’ in this context appears to be a metaphor from zoology (‘termite colony’, ‘colonial insect’) but a related political metaphor is also used for a type of transfer within paradigmatic ‘colonies’ (Fairclough 1993; Bhatia 2004: 95). Promotional genres such as academic job advertisements and applications for promotion within the university (Fairclough 1993) have always aimed to promote the interests of the text producer, but in the last thirty years they have tended more and more also to use a promotional discourse. This discourse seems to have spread from other members of the promotional colony of genres, and Fairclough (1993) regards this as part of a process of marketization in which promotional discourse ‘colonizes’ other genres.

The Sydney school (cf. Martin and Rose 2008) has a different definition of genre within a more rigorous theory. It is a structural part of the theory that genres occur in paradigmatic assemblages. The school has paid a great deal of attention to educational genres, and in particular to learner writing at school level. Relying on structural and formal features of the texts within the genres, they construct ‘families’ of genres within which more delicate groupings occur, differentiated by family-specific criteria of form and representations of cognitive processes. Thus Martin and Rose (2008) identify major families such as stories, histories, reports, explanations, procedures (which tell us what to do) and procedural recounts (which recount what has been done). Science is said to make use of the last four of these families. An example of the way family members are articulated is the family of reports. This contains descriptive reports which ‘classify a phenomenon and then describe its features’, classifying reports which ‘subclassify a number of phenomena with respect to a given set of criteria’ and compositional reports which ‘describe the components of an entity’ (Martin and Rose 2008: 142; Nesi and Gardner 2012). Procedural recounts include technical notes (in industrial research, for example), research articles and experiment reports, and these can be shown to have similar staging due to their similar aims.

These paradigmatic groupings of functionally similar units may concern units that are smaller than conventional genre. Because genres can have multiple purposes, it may only be aspects of a genre which share in a particular paradigmatic relation with a particular colony of genres, and other aspects may be shared with another colony. Bhatia notes that academic introductions (regarded as a genre) are often marginal members of the promotional colony as well as central members of some other grouping. This recalls Hyland’s (2011) characterization of thesis acknowledgements as a genre. What at one level is a genre may be composed of units which can themselves be characterized as genres.
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Hierarchy

The remaining types of relations draw together genres with different aims or functions but within the same field. These are genres used by people with shared specialist and genre knowledge and practices, what are often called ‘discourse communities’. Swales (1990) envisaged discourse communities as using a number of genres to communicate with one another, with all members in principle equally using all genres. Research communities are structured like this, though of course there are central, more powerful individuals using more of some genres than less powerful individuals. Alternatively genres may be produced by different parties with in principle very little overlap between them, as in the case of educational genres where learners and teachers produce different (but corresponding) genres. In fact, genres may be associated with a wide variety of more or less cohesive social groupings (Devitt 2004).

One relation between genres used by the same discourse community is the one called ‘hierarchical’ by Swales (2004). Some genres are more highly valued than others within their immediate fields. This is partly (crassly) because external judges give more credit to some genres for promotion and tenure, but it derives from ‘community’ consensus as well. In most academic disciplines, journal articles are more prestigious than textbooks or popularizations, but their status in relation to monographs, ‘letters’ and conference presentation varies with the discipline. Thus, Grudin (2013) says that in the field of computer science, in the US at least, papers from selective conferences, published in advance of the oral presentation, are the most prestigious genre (see also Räisänen 2002). By contrast, in fields like history and literary studies, and perhaps the humanities in general, monograph books still retain a high status. Hierarchy derives from the ‘culture’ of the community that genre users belong to. For example, trade conference presentations may be highly valued among practitioners but much less so among academics, and a user who is a member of two communities (applied researcher and practitioner, for example) may be guided by two different hierarchies (Shaw 2010).

Syntagmatic relations

The other relations between genres within fields are characterized by the concept of uptake. Freadman (e.g. 2002) adapts the term and concept from speech-act theory to refer to the relation between a genre and one that responds to it in some way. A conference proposal abstract takes up a call for papers, and a letter of acceptance or rejection takes up a conference proposal abstract. Texts in the uptaking genre respond to previous texts in a preceding genre, and by doing so they validate the genre status of both sets of texts. Here, there is likely to be what Fairclough (1992: 271) calls manifest intertextuality – actual re-use of words or phrases, explicit reference or even quotation. Many writers of exam essays, for example, take care to use the wording and structure of the question prominently in their answer. Freadman, and particularly Maurer (2009), note that wielders of the uptaking genre have the power to define the genre of the text they are ‘receiving’. For example, a journal review or a promotion committee can ascribe the status ‘popularization’ or ‘textbook’ to something whose author thought of it as a monograph. Thus, discussion of uptaking genres deals not just with relationships between text in different genres, but with the structure and meaning potentials in whole social groups.

One possible type of relation within a field involving uptake is that between genre and metagenre (Giltrow 2002). A metagenre is one that gives (insightful or misleading)
instructions on how to produce a particular genre. Examples include instructions as to how to write learner genres (essays) such as guidelines, plagiarism warnings, grading criteria, etc. Giltrow suggests that we must analyze the metageneric atmosphere of a classroom: the types of metageneric support available in it. A whole hierarchy of metagenres can in fact be observed in university teaching. The generic activity in the class is prescribed by the professor’s course description, which is itself metagenerically regulated by departmental or university requirements. At least in Europe, these metagenres defining course descriptions are influenced or determined by the EU norms known as the Bologna process. Rather little research attention has been directed in EAP at the metagenres directing or misdirecting research genres: handbooks, journals’ ‘instructions to authors’, textbooks like Swales and Feak (2012), even standards (NISO 1996). Okamura and Shaw (2014) found that the abstracts appearing in some journals frequently failed to conform to the metageneric instructions in the journals’ instructions to authors, and Paltridge (2002) showed that thesis-writing handbooks misrepresented the variety of forms these could take.

In the metageneric relation between a thesis-writing guide and a thesis, any trace of the guide in the thesis will be uptake. But uptake is more often discussed in relation to syntagmatic relations among genres. Perhaps the simplest of these, and the one to which the term syntagmatic is most obviously applicable, is the chain (Swales 2004) or sequence (Devitt 2004). Räisänen (2002) illustrates this concept in the series of open and occluded genres which includes a conference paper on a field (crash engineering) where it is the top genre in the hierarchy, and thus subject to rather strict quality control:


Chains are not necessarily linear and can be expected to branch and merge, but in most cases successive members of a chain show uptake of the previous one, and this is often in the form of manifest intertextuality. Appropriate use of this intertextuality is part of the genre knowledge that must be acquired by learners. The essence of a chain is an element of dialogue, often between members of different parties, as when inventors apply to patent authorities (Bazerman 1994) or in the teacher–learner interaction in the prompt–essay–feedback sequence.

There is some terminological disagreement around other constellations of genres within communities (see also Flowerdew 2011). Adopting the terms used by Devitt (2004), we can speak of the context of genres, the sum of all genres in the society (of which the intrapersonally known genres are an unorganized subset). Within this context, each field has a set of intertextually related genres. Thus, in the domain covered by EAP, there are links of register, authorship and even direct reference among research proposals, research papers, textbooks, student writing, course descriptions and syllabuses. All the genes examined in EAP can be taken as members of the same set, though not members of the same chain by any means. Within the set, Devitt uses the term genre system (see also Bazerman 1994) for the genres ‘interacting to achieve an overarching function within an activity system’ (Devitt 2004: 56). We can see PhD regulations, metageneric texts, supervisions, thesis texts, defences and grade registration documents (for example) as forming a genre system functioning to grant a PhD degree. Similarly, within the general concept of set, Devitt identifies genre repertoires (Orlikowski and Yates 1994) as ‘the set of genres that a group owns, acting through which a
group achieves all its purposes, not just those connected to a particular activity’ (2004: 57). Swales (1998) introduced the term *textography* for a detailed ethnographic account of the genre repertoire of the community constituted by a university department. The list of genres in the PhD-award system above includes some which might be part of the repertoire of teachers, some of academics, some of PhD students, etc.

From an EAP point of view, the whole academic world has a set of genres and it is these that EAP investigates. In doing so, attention has to be paid to the surrounding context of non-academic genres which provide resources on which novice writers will draw. Particular activities, like getting promoted, running a course or publishing an article involve systems of genres. Particular roles, such as researchers, students, teachers or administrators, require proficiency in a particular genre repertoire.

**Methods: metagenres, corpora, textual analysis, interviews and observation**

A variety of methods and sources can be used to analyze genres and the groups that provide the frames within which they are meaningful (Tardy 2011a, 2011b). Summing up cursorily, four sources can be mentioned: metagenres and background reading; a corpus of texts; informant interviews or questionnaires; and observation. A general method for taking account of these factors in analyzing new genre is proposed by Bhatia (1993, 2004: 189–193). His approach involves seven steps, and a striking feature is that five of these involve metagenres and background reading, interviewing informants and observation of work processes. Only steps 4 and 5 involve examining texts: 4, selecting the corpus, by defining the genre precisely and deciding how much material will be needed; and 5, investigating texts at the levels of lexicogrammar, text patterning, discourse structuring and intertextuality.

**Metagenres**

It is natural to start the analysis by reading previous research on related genres and other descriptions of the ‘community’ in which the target genres are written. Ding (2007) analyzed personal statements in applications to university courses and started by reading (metageneric) recommendations in writing guides and websites, which suggested possible moves for his analysis. This preliminary reading may affect the design of the investigation: Graves et al. (2014) intended at first to restrict their study to either pure or applied mathematics, but background reading in the target domain suggested that the distinction was unworkable.

**Corpora**

If a corpus is used, its content can in principle be completely random. This is the case with automatic genre identification, in which a computer program is used to identify the genre of internet texts. The procedure goes from surface features identifiable by the computer to genre (Crowston 2010). Automatic analyses of this kind are from 75 per cent accurate upwards at identifying rather broad ‘genres’ (Lim et al. 2005, 1267). However, the genres studied (and taught) in EAP require a much higher level of discrimination.

Discriminating at this level calls for a selected corpus. The analyst has to choose a number of texts from a target domain, defined in terms of the discipline(s) and date(s) of the texts, and possibly also in terms of writer characteristics such as first language, gender or position in the community hierarchy. Often the aim will be to include only high-quality work because the
aim of a description within EAP studies is to facilitate learners' production of good-quality texts within the genre. The aim could be to have a representative sample of texts in the genre, as it was for Graves et al. (2014). To ensure quality, they chose the journals with the highest status. Within these journals they selected thirty articles. To ensure that these articles were representative of contemporary publication in mathematics, they selected a recent time period and chose articles from six different issues of each journal, ensuring that they were by different authors. Alternatively, however, the aim may be a thicker description of a case which is typical rather than statistically representative. Kuteeva and McGrath (2015) chose four or five articles by each of five authors, aiming at the depth of investigation afforded by co-operation with the authors themselves.

**Textual analysis**

If a corpus is used, it can be analyzed manually for repeated ‘moves’ and ‘steps’ (Swales 1990, 2004; Bhatia 1993, 2004) and these can then be examined for their lexico-grammatical features, manually or with concordancing software. There is often a certain unacknowledged circularity here, in that the lexico-grammar signals the moves and steps, and the frequent claim that the researcher has based the move-step analysis on segment function rather than form may be suspect. This can be avoided by conscious analytic procedures. Yang (2015) used ‘discourse markers’ such as connectors, section boundaries, paragraph divisions and sub-headings to identify potential moves. He then coded the tentative moves found (with co-workers for intersubjective validation) as obligatory or optional, and then used the keyword function in concordance software to identify words particularly characteristic of the genre, which assisted in identifying and classifying moves. He then consulted experts to confirm and expand the analysis.

**Interviews and observation**

The textual analysis is often at the heart of the process in that a common ultimate aim is to enable learners to produce acceptable products conforming to the features of the model. But it is not a necessary procedure. The last two sources of information mentioned above, informant interviews and observation, could stand by themselves, particularly if the focus is on genre systems or repertoires. Observation is less common and less useful for written genres but a prime source of information for oral ones, particularly in the classroom. Kibler et al. (2014) studied the learner genre of student presentations (called exhibitions in the context they observed). They followed three high-school students over four years, using data ‘gathered from video recordings, field notes, observations and informal interviews’. EAP research still focusses on written genres, though, and here some kind of text examination is often deepened by interviews and discussion with informants. Rounsaville (2014: 337) was interested in what I have called the intrapersonal relations of the genres known by a single informant, a university student. She says that she ‘conducted structured and unstructured interviews’ with the informant, and ‘collected in-school and out-of-school writing, and held discourse-based interviews on selected writings’. Graves et al. (2014) used expert informants to identify appropriate texts. Yang (2015) consulted expert informants ‘to help confirm the generic structure and to identify missing moves and steps’. Kuteeva and McGrath (2015) did a preliminary move-step analysis of two papers from their corpus together with an expert informant, then analyzed the rest of the corpus. Then they discussed the analysis and other issues in wide-ranging interviews with the authors.
The purpose of EAP may be to help learners produce texts which will be effective in the intended community, and so both textual analysis and investigation of the role of the genres and their components in their specific disciplinary community are necessary.

Implications

Intergeneric relations are often described as constitutive of the activity of discourse communities. However, investigations of academic genres often examine them more or less in isolation. It might be more illuminating for both teaching and research to pay greater attention to the relation of genre features to the features of related genres. For example, how do successful conference proposals make use of the wording of the call for papers? How do students make intertextual references in on-line writing and in academic writing? Which sections of articles in a given discipline are typically targeted by reviewers, and where are most changes made in response? Which sections of promotion applications are taken up by reviewers, and how? These are questions which both researchers and learners could usefully ask.

Further reading

Bawarshi and Reiff (2010); Bruce (2008); Paltridge (2012); Tardy (2011b)

Related chapters

2 General and specific EAP
5 Composition studies and EAP
11 Language and L2 writing
15 Systemic functional linguistics and EAP
31 Research articles

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